

FROM OX-CART TO AEROPLANE

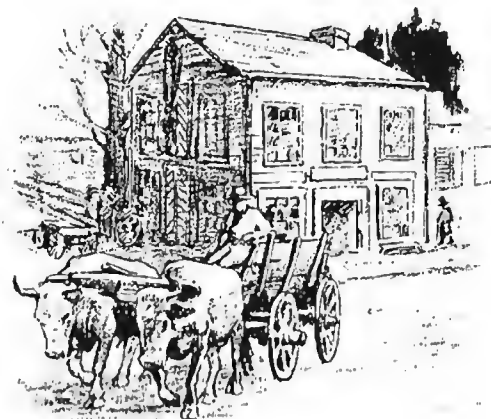


ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF
SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS



FROM OX-CART TO AEROPLANE

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF
SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS



1818 - 1918

PUBLISHED BY
WEED & COMPANY
BUFFALO, N.Y.



Copyrighted, 1918
by
WEED & COMPANY

Text and Plan by James Wallen
Engraving and Printing by
Gies & Co. Branch
American Lithographic Company



The Drama of Hardware

THIS is the story of one hundred years of one house in the hardware business. A record of achievement in the hardware field is, of its very nature, a chronicle of the progress of mankind.

One might not look for romance in the sombre aisles of the hardware storehouse. Reflect that the flinty word "hardware" symbols the heroic in man. Hardware comprises the ax, the saw, the millstone and the ammunition with which our fathers braved the unknown wilds, wresting from the soil and the forest the means of life and civilization.

The sturdy early American hardware merchants naturally conducted their business after the English fashion. It was the Romans who developed English iron-working. In the Forest of Dean, forges and tools along with Roman coin have been unearthed.

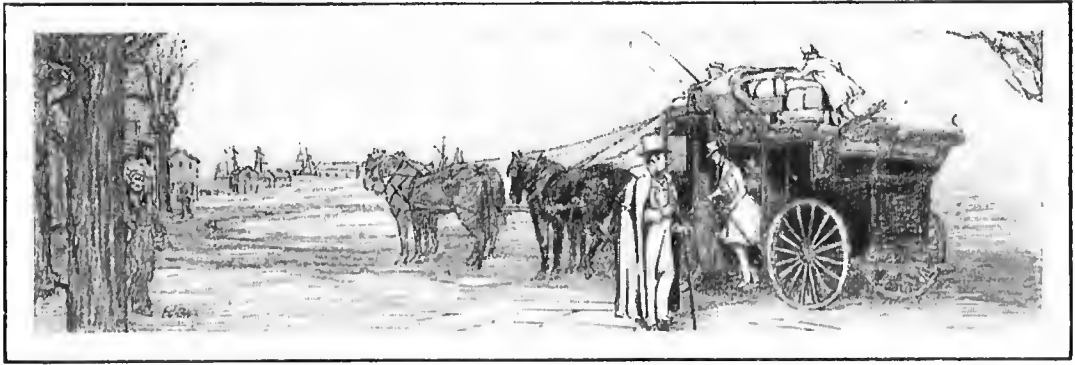
The ironmongers of England were regarded with great respect. They formed their Guild in 1462. It was with this wealth of accumulated knowledge that the American hardware merchant commenced business in the days of colonization. American hardware stores, therefore, were never rudely primitive. Today they are the finest in the world.

By 1800 the Atlantic seaport towns were well supplied with dependable but simple hardware. Seth Thomas

was producing the early examples of his celebrated clocks. John Jacob Astor was buying tools and other hardware in great quantities. A few years later Jonas Chickering made his first piano.

In 1818 the farthest west hardware store was established in Buffalo by George and Thaddeus Weed. In a wilderness village they courageously planted a well-stocked store. Their contribution to the cornerstone of the future metropolis on the Niagara Frontier cannot be measured in words. They heartened the early settler, lightened his labors and protected his very life against the treachery of the savage.

It is of such stuff as gun-powder, plow-shares, two-men saws and logging chains that the refinements of life are born. Before silks and silver was stone and iron. The Weeds then and now, bore the title of "hardware men" proudly for it implies civilization-builder. Now, then for their story.



At the Sign of the Millsaw

WHEN the Batavia stage-coach rumbled into Buffalo one fair day in 1818, two youthful passengers were discharged, who likely agreed with Leigh Hunt that "the stage-coach is a great and unpretending accommodation." For George and Thaddeus Weed had come from Troy—part of the long way by wagon.

The Weed cousins evidently believed that the surest way to succeed is to select a location where competition is absent. Buffalo was then without a hardware merchant or a gunsmith. No tools nor implements were obtainable west of Batavia, the metropolis of the new west.

A glorious autumn haze hung over the village on September 23rd, 1818, when G. & T. Weed opened the heavy batten doors of their new store. Friendly greetings tokened well. The village joker predicted that they would "grow as weeds will."

"In the bright lexicon of youth, there is no such word as fail." True, as D. S. Warner says, "there wasn't five dollars current money between Aurora and Holland." Shinplasters were issued by private firms in lieu of money, acceptable from one turnpike to another. The shinplaster was evidently the parent of the modern trade acceptance.



THADDEUS WEED

The Indian allies of the British had applied the flaming cattail to the village in 1813. The next cruel visitation was the cold summer of 1816, with snow in May and June, followed by a two years' crop blight.

This dismal trade data confronted G. & T. Weed when they calculated their business prospects in the frontier town. It was offset by the fact that Buffalo was already considered as the terminus of the projected "Grand Erie Canal." The Bank of Niagara had been established with the idea of arranging local finance so that money would have a staple value.

The census of 1818 revealed the population of Buffalo to be 842 whites and 1200 Indians. The chain store representatives who count the passers-by on Buffalo's busy corners today, take toll of as many folk in a few hours.

The slate on which accounts were kept at Weed's Ironmongery was illuminated with such names as Walk-in-the-Water, Red Jacket, Young King, Little Billy, Astride Town, Seneca White, Captain Pollard and other notable Indian chiefs of the period. In recognition of the friendliness of Walk-in-the-Water, the first steamboat to plow the waters of the Great Lakes was named for him.

The fact that you lacked cash was no bar to trading at Weed's providing you had the prowess of John Turkey, an Indian. John encountered three panthers on his way to town. Like Samson of old, he labored with the beasts, and Weed's accepted three panther hides in exchange for an ax and a bridle that same morning.

Twelve years before the first railroad was built, wagons and ox-carts carried supplies from the east to the Weed store. A patron leaving a special order, had to wait while stage-driver and courier carried the request to the east, and the goods came by the Adirondack trails.

Three mails a week came by Albany coach and occasionally it brought a traveler from the luxurious east. One such complained bitterly when asked to pay full fare after having helped to pry the coach out of the mud at several points enroute. Even the town thoroughfares caused annoyance, for Onondaga (now Washington) Street was described by a scholarly gentleman as "a mud road of Plutonian depths."

The original Weed Store had a frontage on Main Street (then Willink Avenue) of 40 feet and a depth on Swan Street of 20 feet. When twilight descended on the village the tallow dips sent mellow beams thru the store windows. The lighthouse built that very year, responded with stronger and more certain rays. Nothing obstructed the view between the Weed Store and Lake Erie.

In daytime, the Weed customer could watch Sheldon Thompson's thirty yoke of oxen pull the schooners up the Niagara River against a nine-mile current allied to a strenuous gale. A wit called the process the "horn breeze." The vessels took on cargoes at the natural Black Rock wharf further up the world-famed river. The Buffalo fleet made astounding growth in the first Weed year. It boasted two steamboats, forty schooners, fourteen sloops and twenty-eight yawl-rigged open boats. As other settlements dotted the shores of the Great Lakes, the faith of marine men of 1818 in the future Queen City of the Inland Seas, was justified.

In those years there was waged a verbal war between a band of politicians who wanted the Grand Canal to end at Black Rock and others who demanded that the waterway be dug for two miles and a half west to Buffalo Creek. The fact that the stalwarts of Buffalo Creek won is familiar history. An appropriation of \$12,500 for deepening the Creek and \$2000 for the lighthouse and pier improvements was secured at the same time.

However, this political wrangle over waterways had a pronounced influence on G. & T. Weed's advertising policy. Doctor John E. Marshall, Albert H. Tracy, James Sheldon and Isaac Phelps formed the "Kremlin Junta" and advocated the Buffalo Creek interests. Federal Congressman Malcom Clarke, Judge Elias Osborne, John C. Spencer and Benjamin Ellicott were the opposing forum.

The two newspapers, "The Buffalo Patriot-Gazette" and "The Journal" took sides. When the Junta had its way, the "Patriot-Gazette" was exceedingly mournful. G. & T. Weed discreetly advertised in both papers. The issue of the "Patriot-Gazette" in which the advertisement here reproduced appeared, predicted that Buffalo would be swept into the dust-pan of time under such control.

Hardware, Ironmongery, &c.

G. & T. WEED,

HAVE lately opened at the STORE next below Messrs. TOWNSEND & COIT, a very general and extensive assortment of

HARDWARE, CUTLERY, SADLERY, CABINET WARES & IRONMONGERY,

Principally of their own Importation, which will be sold unusually low, by **WHOLESALE or RETAIL.** A constant supply of

Dutch Bolting Cloths, Bench & Moulding Planes.

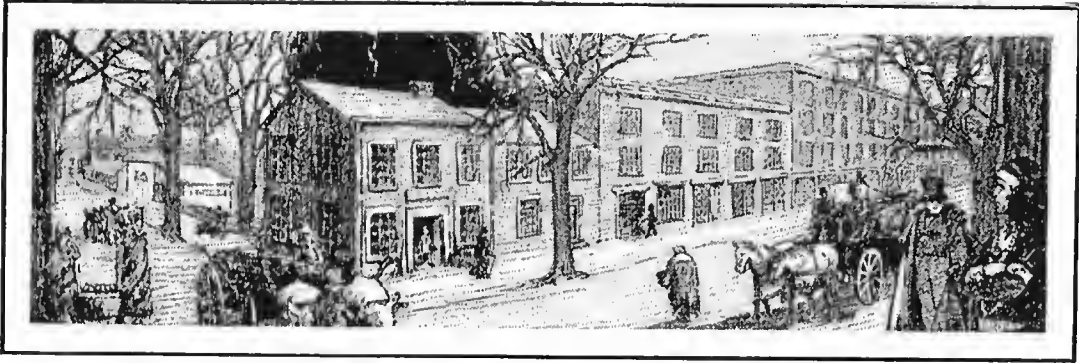
As Agents to the Manufactory at Albany, they offer for sale, **SCREWS, TUBS and ROLLERS for Oil-Mills, SCREWS for Paper-Mills, ditto for raising Mill-Stones** and for various other uses, made to any order—**CHURCH CLOCKS, &c. &c.**

BUFFALO, September 23, 1818.

D. M. DAY, Pr.



DE WITT C WEED



Gleams of Romance

THE futility of partisan prophecy and the lack of wisdom in words in which there is more heat than light, is emphasized by the "Patriot-Gazette's" editorial. For in 1918 Buffalo is the major aeroplane and motor-truck city, and the "Patriot-Gazette's" humble advertiser, one of the great wholesale and retail hardware concerns of America.

The Weed cousins prospered, for as old-fashioned business men put it, they combined "sober industry and good judgment, enlivened by an occasional flash of imagination."

Being Puritans, George and Thaddeus Weed were appalled by the fact that the village was without a church structure when they came to Buffalo. With several other Episcopalians they founded the Church of St. Paul.

Today, folk are hurried to reach ultra-modern stores in the ever shortened selling hours. In 1818 the Weed Store promoted Sunday closing. Judge Elijah Holt and Deacon Callender put down "walking to Black Rock" as a Sabbath desecration but the Weeds were content with enforcing the Sunday closing rule. Some few of the pioneer merchants considered the idea of cutting off the possibility of a chance sale as too progressive for commercial safety.

Romance lingers persistently about a church. So it happens that while Thaddeus Weed was in the public eye as a merchant, his efforts in connection with the musical and literary activities of old St. Paul's brought him to the favor of a lady of exquisite grace and gentleness.

The residence and professional quarters of Doctor Cyrenius Chapin adjoined the Weed Store on the Swan Street side. Doctor Chapin's third daughter, Louise Marie, admired the purposeful young business man who labored under the very windows of her father's house. She, too, came from proud Puritan stock. The native culture of Thaddeus Weed appealed to Louise Chapin and admiration blossomed into love. They were married in the autumn of 1823. With but one brief interruption their sons and grandsons have conducted the hardware house of Weed thru the century.

Along with personal felicity came business success. In two years the bustling business had outgrown the original store. The Weeds were supplying everything from kitchen utensils to church-bells. A new two-story frame building was erected on Main at Swan Street in 1820. And for twenty years this building was the scene of the old-time courtesy and willing service.

As we sit in the theatre and watch the record of current events flow thru the lens of the moving-picture machine, we exclaim, "things move swiftly these days." Review history in tabloid for the years 1818-1828—a decade in the filing-case of time.

The first passage of the Atlantic by steam was made when the Savannah arrived at Liverpool from New York. The Erie Canal was opened and inland navigation of the United States given impetus. The first railway in America was completed at Quincy, Mass. Medical science blessed humanity by inventing the stethoscope.

President James Monroe enunciated the Monroe Doctrine. John Quincy Adams became our sixth President. General Lafayette paid us his memorable visit. Mississippi, Illinois, Alabama and Missouri were admitted to the Union. Spain ceded Florida.

The Panama Congress was held. A high protective tariff was enacted. Sir Walter Scott published his *Ivanhoe*. Napoleon died at St. Helena. On July 4th, 1826, both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were called by death.

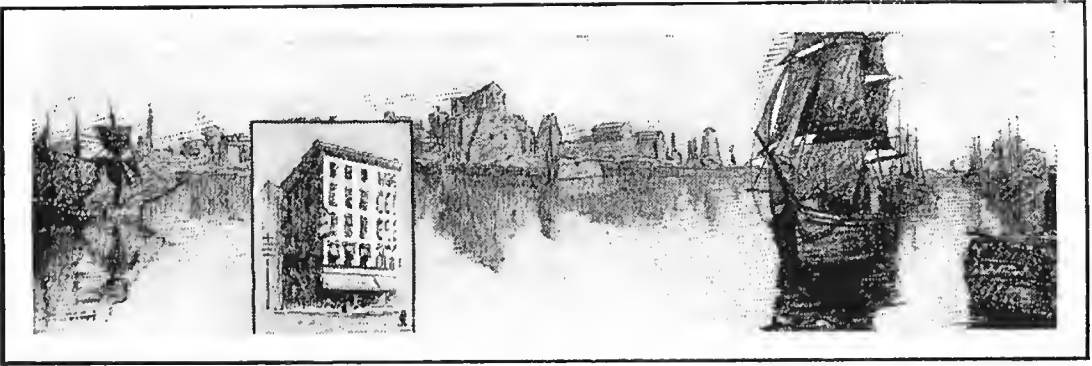
Near the close of these wonderful ten years, Thaddeus Weed acquired business projects in the east and left the Buffalo interests entirely in the hands of his cousin-partner, George. In July of the same year, 1827, George Weed went to Auburn, New York, to visit a brother. Becoming suddenly ill, he died.

In 1827 Buffalo issued a town directory. The trading-post had attained the dignity of municipality. "It had put on long trousers" said a journalist of a later day. The Weed business was a valuable one. For two years Samuel F. Pratt and General Lucius F. Storrs conducted the house for the Weed heirs. In 1829 Thaddeus Weed returned to Buffalo and was royally welcomed. He purchased the Weed interests in the store. General Storrs retired and the firm was styled Weed & Pratt.

In 1842 the corner-stone of a brick building, three stories high, was laid. The block was described as an ornament to the town. Similar structures were being erected at the time, and the hardware and building equipment trades were due to harvest profits.

Here again the Weed romance comes into our story to humanize what might drift into a gray recital of business succession. In 1851, DeWitt C. Weed, son of Thaddeus and Louise Chapin Weed, became the owner of the store. Edward P. Beals remained with him and

William A. Anderson associated himself with the concern. The sign-board read, DeWitt C. Weed & Company. A half dozen years later DeWitt C. Weed judiciously mixed affection and business wisdom. He invited his younger brother, Hobart, to come into the establishment as a managing member. And now we have come to the middle years, crowned with the halo of personal remembrance for many of our readers.



The Middle Years

THE development of a concern is marked by its buildings. As the business family grows you need a larger store. The year Hobart Weed stepped into a place of responsibility, 1857, the third and most famous of the three Weed Blocks at Main and Swan Streets was erected.

For forty-eight years this building with its chaste front of white stone brought from Quincy, Illinois, was a hive of industry. The trade journal "Iron Age," in 1880 classed this Weed Store as the most harmoniously arranged retail hardware shop in the country.

Two Presidents of the United States and a Postmaster General were tenants of the Weed Block. When Millard Fillmore was nominated as Vice-President on the ticket with Zachary Taylor, his law office was above the Weed Store. Mr. Fillmore was a farmer's son, brought up as a wool-carder. He educated himself and became a law clerk. Later he practiced law, was Comptroller of New York State, Vice-President of the United States and then President. Hobart Weed used to remark that he had as good a chance as Mr. Fillmore but he preferred to sell hardware.

Grover Cleveland not only saw his clients in the Weed Block, but made it his home before he went to Albany as Governor of the Empire State. It was in the Weed



HOBART WEED

Store that the much-loved fisherman President made his acquaintance with the rods and tackle favored by experts. Hobart Weed kept Mr. Cleveland informed of the innovations in angling.

Mr. Cleveland and Joseph Jefferson used to trade rods. August Pitou, who is the possessor of the rod with which the great actor last fished says, "It was presented to me by Charlie Jefferson as a memento of his father, and it hangs in my bedroom, the joints tied together just as he last handled it. Often as I look at it, it brings him to my mind more vividly even than do the two photographs of him hanging in the same room, and I sometimes wonder if it misses the grip of the expert angler who so often handled it when playing and landing a fish. This rod is eloquent to me. It tells me a part of the life story of a man who loved to be in the open, in close touch with nature, while he meditated on her beauties and her inscrutable secrets. No one shall ever fish with this cherished rod while I live. It is the most companionable inanimate thing I own."

Honorable Wilson S. Bissell was a member of the eminent law firm of Bass, Cleveland & Bissell. Mr. Bissell's term as Postmaster General of the United States was attended by great strides in the rapid transportation of mail.

The Weed business house of the middle years was five stories high. The total floor space for hardware selling and storage was thirty by one hundred and fifty feet. The building was pictured on the cover of the Weed Almanac reproduced in this volume.

The Almanac by the way, was the especial charge of Hobart Weed who had a genius for advertising. The publicity problems simply gravitated to the genial junior partner, and he made the fame of the Weed Store country-wide.

The heavy-type editorials of Colonel Harvey, copied by a thousand newspapers, are no more trenchant than some of the virile sermonettes appearing in Weed's Almanac. The following on "Money" from the issue for 1866 is a classic:—

Money

Money is a queer institution. It buys provender, satisfies justice and heals wounded honor. Everything resolves itself into cash from stock jobbing to building churches. Childhood craves pennies; youth aspires to dimes, and manhood is swayed by the mighty dollars. The blacksmith swings his sledge, the lawyer pleads for his client, and the judge decides his question of life or death for his salary. Money makes the man, therefore man must make money, if he would be respected by fools; for the eye of the world looks through golden spectacles. It buys Brussels carpets, lace curtains, gilded cornices, rich furniture, and builds marble mansions. It drives us to church in splendid equipages and pays the rent of the best pews. It buys silks and jewelry for my lady—it commands the respect of gaping crowds, insures obsequious attention. It enables us to be charitable, to send Bibles to the heathen, and to remove domestic indigence. It gilds the rugged scenes of life, and spreads over them a velvet carpet soft to our tread; the rude scenes and turmoils are encased in gilt frames. It bids care vanish, soothes the anguish of the bed of sickness; stops short of nothing save the grim destroyer, whose relentless hand spares none, but levels all mortal distinctions, and teaches poor weak humanity that it is but dust. Wealth pauses on the brink of eternity; the beggar and the millionaire rest side by side beneath the sod, to rise in equality and answer the final summons.

The tragic note of the Civil War is sounded in an editorial written by Mr. Weed for the Almanac of 1863.

To Our Patrons

We again republish our Almanac after omitting it for a year. The many exciting scenes our Country has passed through during the past year, we will not attempt to describe, but sincerely hope, that the day is not far distant, when we will be able to crush out this wicked rebellion, and that "peace and prosperity" may again reign throughout the land.

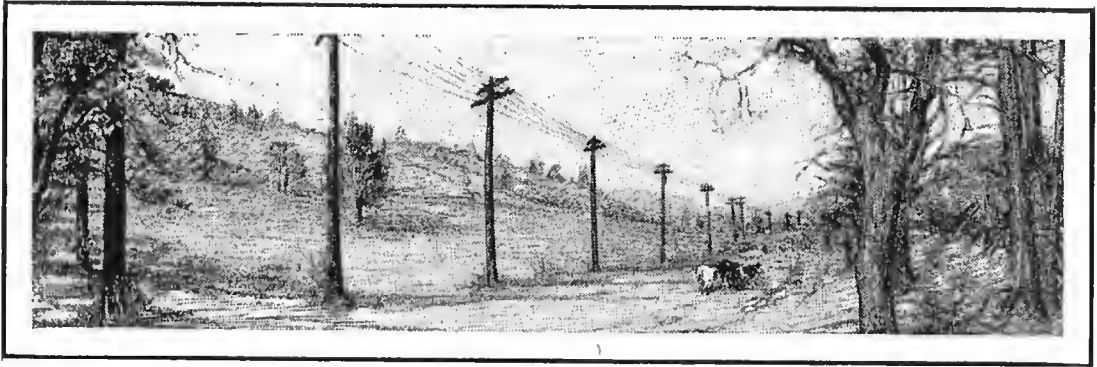
In presenting this to our customers, and the public generally, we would call their attention to our large and full assortment of goods in the hardware line, assuring them that they will always meet with their satisfaction.

In 1876 DeWitt C. Weed died. For a short period C. C. Van Deventer shared the management of the Company with Hobart Weed. In 1878 the stationery was headed "Old Hardware Store—Weed & Van Deventer, Successors to D. C. Weed & Company." Old in Eighteen Hundred Seventy-Eight!

Then Hobart Weed took the helm himself. The printer booked an order for letter-heads and statements to read Weed & Company—which stands today.



WALTER IRVING WEED



Years of Achievement

ON July 18th, of the year that Hobart Weed became the master-mind of Weed & Company, the Fire Alarm Telegraph sounded "two-six." This is pertinent to our story from three points of view. Firstly, Thaddeus Weed was a founder of this advanced fire company. Secondly, one had to consult Weed's Almanac to discover the location of a fire. The Almanac was the official Fire Alarm Telegraph Directory. Thirdly, "two-six" was an Elk Street box number. The Red Jacket Drove Yards Hotel was illuminating the sky. The Red Jacket Hotel was a very significant factor in the business life of 1878. It was to Buffalo what the Stockyards Inn and the Saddle and Sirloin Club are to Chicago in 1918. The stock men brought their herds to Buffalo in preference to other centers, because the Red Jacket Hotel was comfortable, cheery and convenient to the yards—in fact, rather too much so for other than drovers. That cattle are bred in the country and find their commercial value in town was understood by the early men of Buffalo. The fire company made a courageous fight on that strenuous day but the frame hotel with its Colonial front was doomed. Three years later, E. J. Hall, the manager of the Bell Telephone Exchange at Buffalo, reported that his switchboard room with twelve boy operators had become "a perfect Bedlam." The involved methods

of those times required two to six boys to handle each call. The boys rushed up and down the central frame, plugging the connections. Mr. Hall complained that the boy operators played tricks with the apparatus, swore at the subscribers and acted generally like the apes in Barnum's Zoo. He made a plea for the feminine "voice with the smile."

Progress in public utilities is more spectacular than that of hardware, however definite the latter may be. The house of P. & F. Corbin, New Britain, Conn., founded in 1854, did yeoman service in the refining of builders hardware. In 1882, Weed & Company were enabled to announce that "the following buildings and residences in Buffalo, are among the number where Corbin trimmings have been installed by us: Mr. George Van Vleck, Mr. C. M. Farrar, Mr. N. Brown, Mr. A. Meldrum, Mr. J. H. Lee, Mr. N. Holland, Capt. James Davidson, Marine Bank, Merchants' Bank, Bank of Buffalo, State Insane Asylum, White's Building, Hayen Building, and other elegant places."

In 1856, E. C. Atkins commenced the making of saws of a superior grade at Indianapolis. Weed & Company have distributed thousands of Atkins Saws, and it is fitting that a tribute should be paid to Mr. Atkins in this Weed Centennial Book. Elias Atkins built his first tempering furnace without mortar, by his own hands. It collapsed after its first firing. Mr. Atkins was not dismayed—the saws produced paid the brickmakers and also provided a permanent furnace. Mr. Atkins evolved the formula for "silver steel," one of the distinguishing features of his celebrated saws. When the Indianapolis venture was started, Mr. Atkins' strongest competitors were Henry Disston & Sons, of Philadelphia, and this friendly rivalry of time-honored houses continues to this day.

The ripe old age of Weed & Company is best illustrated by the birthdays of some of the best known hardware manufacturers who have trade alliances with the Buffalo house today. L. & I. J. White made their first carpenters tools in Buffalo in 1837. Russell Jennings bits were being made in 1840. R. E. Dietz, the Diogenes of the hardware world, started lantern making in 1840. The Stanley Works started operations in 1852. Buck Brothers Chisel Works were moved from Sheffield, England, to Millbury, Mass. in 1853. The names of Barney & Berry will bring pleasant pictures from the past. They commenced manufacturing skates in 1862 at Springfield, Mass. In the old days Weed & Company equipped many a merry party with Barney & Berry's shiny skates.

There are a few outstanding historic business houses in America permanently associated with the lives as well as the names of pioneer families. Brooks Brothers became clothiers to men in 1818, in the heart of cultured New York. The Studebaker Brothers began wagon-building with a capital of \$68 and two forges in 1852, at South Bend, Indiana. Other notable family business proprietorships are those of the Steinways, pianoforte makers and the Oliver Plow makers. The Weed family is proud to be in this distinguished company.

Walter A. Dyer says that there is something distinctly human about the development of the industrial arts. By a study of this subject we gain a living picture of the men and manners of a former time, and history is thereby made a more vital thing. A glance over the old catalogs of Weed & Company is a panoramic view of the development of agriculture and industry in Western New York.

One of the important departments of the Weed Store in the early years was the cabinet-makers corner

where the artisan could find—table butts, bed screws, sand paper, sofa springs, web saws, glue, drawer and cupboard locks, castors, escutcheons and bolts, lace tacks, etc. Where today there are a few furniture factories producing in quantities, in the middle years of this house, there were in Buffalo a number of individual cabinet-makers. While much fine furniture is created today, fortunate is the man who possesses a piece made with loving care by the old-fashioned artist-craftsman. Such furniture is precious.

As the years lengthened into a half century and more, indoor hardware became finer, and outdoor appliances more powerful. Before the day of wire nails, Weed & Company advertised Jefferson iron nails, free from broken ones and dust. On the farm of John R. Fero at Alden, New York, Weed & Company introduced the first steel barbed fencing which they announced in a rhythmic phrase "never rusts, stains, decays, shrinks nor warps." A lawn-mower which had attracted attention at the Philadelphia Centennial was presented in Buffalo in the Weed Store.

There is a popular notion that an old business has simply grown to its present proportions like a weather-worn oak, whereas, a new concern is carefully nurtured into being. The fact is that the management of an old house has in the main followed principles which are today called scientific. This thought dominates the mind as we near three-quarters of a century in the story of a concern which survived the stress and storm of five score years.

A display of "perpetual youth and untired energy" always brings forth admiration. We glory in the old age that retains the zest and enthusiasm of youth.

In the phrase of the editorial rooms, the news writers of a quarter-century ago "spread" themselves on the

story of the seventy-fifth anniversary celebration of Weed & Company. Here is a sort of composite review compiled from the reports of the event, appearing in the Buffalo newspapers, September 23, 1893:

Buffalo's oldest inhabitant smiled with satisfaction today when he went by the ancient hardware store of Weed & Company, Main and Swan Streets. The younger generations joined his happiness, and the old and young went hand in hand to share in the festivities and eat of the good things incident to the seventy-fifth celebration of the establishment of the house on the same corner where it stands today. It was a notable occasion. Any business house that passes the half-century mark can be reckoned a land-mark in the development of the nation's industries. Weed & Company's corner has seen the growth of Buffalo from the time of the first steam boats to the present when it is the terminus of a vast lake commerce. And it may be said that Weed & Company's Store has kept pace with the march of improvement. It is reckoned one of the model stores of its kind in America.

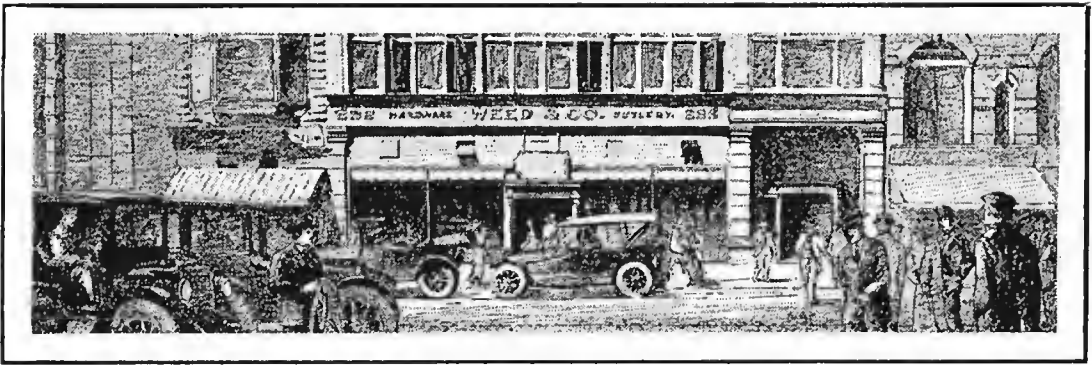
The store was gaily trimmed with red, white and blue bunting, hung in festoons from two central bells in the two connecting stores. In the rear office were displayed many tributes from Buffalo business men to the members of the firm, Hobart Weed and James R. Smith. There was a magnificent set floral piece from James P. White, marked "G. and T. Weed, 1818, Weed & Co., 1893." T. Guilford Smith of the Carnegie Steel Company sent a huge cluster of LaFrance roses, Walbridge & Co., a basket of the same queen of its family, and the other remembrances were from John L. Kimberly, W. J. Palmer & Son, W. H. Glenny, Sons & Co., Albert J. Barnard and the John T. Noye Manufacturing Company. The last house sent a very interesting gift in the shape of a fine bit of bolting cloth

accompanied by a letter saying that as the advertisement of the old firm announced "a constant supply of Dutch bolting cloths" for sale, it might be profitable to compare the old cloth with the modern, made chiefly in France and Switzerland.

There are exhibited several framed receipted bills of sale of the old firm, one dated 1821, being made out for Captain Daniel Dobbins, a pioneer lake navigator and father of the late Captain David Porter Dobbins. Another was dated 1824, and made out for James Sweeney, father of James Sweeney of West Huron Street.

Very handsome souvenirs of the day were distributed to visitors and customers. They were silver-plated paper-weights in several finishes, and rich silver spoons, engraved in the bowl. Upstairs over the main floor, Caterer Clark served a fine lunch at noon. An orchestra was stationed in an adjoining room. Among the gentlemen from out of the city who paid their respects were Mr. Tillinghast, of the J. M. Warren Company, Troy; C. H. Parsons, of P. & F. Corbin, New Britain, Conn.; W. K. Stanbury, of the Eagle File Company; C. F. Gridley, of Gridley & Son, Elmira; Mr. Barker, of Barker, Rose & Gray, Elmira.

James R. Smith, who is mentioned in this account was a co-partner during this Diamond Anniversary period. Mr. Smith had succeeded Robert P. Wilson. Both of these men contributed substantially to the expansion of the business. "Build Strong" was the working motto of the Weed organization in these vital years.



Rounding Out the Century

BUFFALO'S past, present and future is bound up in one word—Transportation. Buffalo is a night's ride from practically every important city east of the Mississippi, no more, and in some cases less. It is the terminus of fifteen railroad lines. It commands the most favorable position on the Great Lakes. The dynamic effects of the Erie Canal in the old days will be surpassed by the Barge Canal. Fortunes have been made on Buffalo's docks.

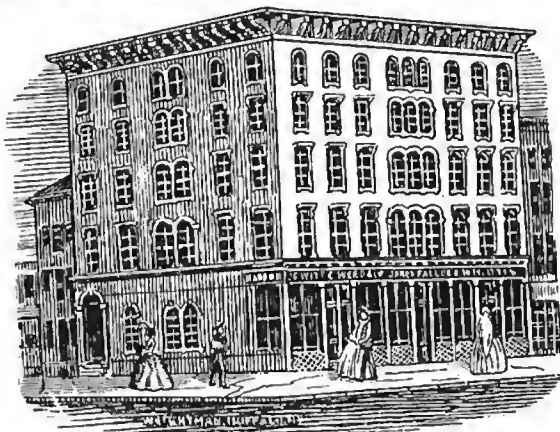
Horace Greeley once predicted that Buffalo would be the greatest commercial city on the continent. While the Weed family have never been as effusive as the famous editor of "The Tribune," they have always believed in Buffalo. They have banked on its future. A transportation city was bound to be a big jobbing center.

In 1895, the Weed retail business simply insisted on larger quarters. The goods were jostling the arms of the shoppers. The old building which had served so efficiently thru many prosperous years could no longer accommodate the trade. It had grown old and uncomfortable, so the retail operations were moved to the center of the same block—the roomy store which gracefully curves and runs from Main to Erie Streets. In 1901 the historic Weed Block was replaced by the Fidelity Trust Company building.

WEED'S HARDWARE STORE

222 MAIN STREET, BUFFALO, N. Y.

ALMANAC



1861

DE WITT C. WEED. GEO. BEALS. W. A. ANDERSON.

Breed, Butler & Co., Printers, 188 Main Street, Buffalo

It was recognized that the quickening ways of business in the last quarter of a century called for reorganization. Weed & Company was incorporated in 1903. Shortly after this time the two sons of Hobart Weed were elected to offices. Mr. Shelton Weed became Vice-President and Mr. Walter Irving Weed, Treasurer.

A modern philosopher has said that many of our best moves are accidents. Weed leadership in the retail hardware lines made it inevitable that the wholesale business would develop. Other merchants recognizing the vast buying capacity of Weed & Company, came to this house for stock. The wholesale business simply grew and grew, reminding one of the prediction of the village jester in 1818 that "the Weeds would grow as weeds will."

It would not have taken a sage to forecast the fact that under the direction of Hobart Weed, the wholesale business would be expanded every year. Mr. Weed's greatest capital was his habit of automatically making friends. Charles W. Miller, the famous and much loved transfer executive, says that to know Hobart Weed was to be his friend. Mr. Weed considered the accumulation of good will as important as selling goods. He could pick men and then insure their loyalty by his kindly counsel and consideration. Hobart Weed was aware of Emerson's dictum, that to have friends, you must be one.

So with the extending of the wholesale business, Mr. Weed selected one hundred per cent assistants and proceeded to enlist the co-operation of manufacturers and retail dealers alike. The wholesale business occupied various warehouses on Pearl and Swan Streets until it more than justified a home of its own. Then in 1905, a palatial building, if one can so describe a hardware house, was made the headquarters of Weed & Company's Wholesale Department.

An architect who believes that a commercial building may have the elements of beauty, designed this structure. There is something of the Spanish and Italian romantic quality about its coloring and over-hanging eaves, suggesting the epoch when commerce touched the Renaissance. There is also a dignity in its arches which compels your respect.

The interior is made for work, but under pleasant and healthful auspices. Light and air are essential to effectiveness in human beings. We were made for the woods and fields. To approximate open air labor in office work was the intent of the engineers in planning the Swan Street Building of Weed & Company.

A stock-taking journey thru this building is of more sentimental interest than one might think. The log chains so much a part of the life of 1818 are in 1918 drawing logs for wooden ships to help win the war. Game traps bring two contrasting pictures—one of the cold north of Rex Beach's stories and the other of the gorgeously robed lady of the brougham in her rich furs.

There are cow-bells and if you listen you will hear "Brindle, Ebony, Speckle and Bess shaking their horns in the evening winds." Dietz lanterns remind you that there are places in our broad land where the light of the Mazda does not penetrate. Washing machines of modern construction tell you that Monday is not as blue as it used to be.

Ice cream freezers of large capacity bring visions of the table dressed with 1847 Rogers Bros. silver, snowy linen and fine china. Ball Brothers glass jars admonish you to do your duty in the conservation of vegetables and fruits. Galvanized ware and aluminum utensils bespeak the sanitary kitchen.

Machine tools and steel-tray wheel-barrows advocate the nobility of labor. Bar-iron and steel, tin-plate

and wire-cloth preach eloquently of industrial and architectural wonders. While the humble poultry-fence net, warns you to keep the chickens in your own back-yard. The whir of the factory and mill is given off by the rolls of Grattan & Knight leather belting. Carborundum reveals in its luminous particles the picture of Doctor Acheson experimenting with the roar of Niagara Falls coming like the music of a mighty organ thru his laboratory windows.

All of these products may be seen in the retail store, but at Swan Street the abundance in normal times amazes one. A thousand tons of wire nails is an average Weed supply. The Swan Street building soon needed assistance, and there is now an overflow warehouse extending back to Seneca Street. This commodious hardware-trove is pictured with the other Weed buildings in this book.

The Weed business looked for other worlds to conquer in 1911. The Rochester firm of Weaver, Palmer & Richmond, an established house, was absorbed by Weed & Company. Both the wholesale and retail departments of the former proprietors have since then been operated by the Weeds. The Kodak City venture was successful from the start. Since that time, Weed & Company have developed mutually profitable relationships with Rochester industry, being large sellers of Eastman photographic goods. This has its historic interest, because when the Weed business was founded, there were no cameras. The daguerreo-type was invented in Paris, in 1839.

Coincident with the well-timed Rochester acquisition the house of Weed suffered an unexpected and grievous loss. Walter Irving Weed died on August 17th, 1911. He was of the spiritual and artistic type, yet with the practical ability to systematize and plan. Walter Weed devised a system of credits and office-



The Weed & Company Establishment—Buffalo
Main to Erie Streets

record-keeping that is operating unchanged in the intricate Weed business today. His life is sketched in the biographical section of this volume, but as a part of the business history of Weed & Company, we quote verbatim a memorial written by Mr. Franklin D. Locke for the board of directors:

Since the last meeting of the Board, this company has sustained a severe blow in the death of Walter Irving Weed, its Treasurer. He had been with the company and the firm which it succeeded throughout his entire business life. He had devoted to its interests his best study and thought. He had systematized its financial affairs in such a manner as to enable the members of this Board to ascertain its standing and condition from day to day and from month to month. His devotion was continuous and an integral part of his life. We cannot feel otherwise than that a large part of the success of the company is attributable directly to his efforts. Of the finest nature, of unbending integrity, of marked courtesy to all of his associates, of gentle ways, of keen perception, he brought to the conduct of the business in all his relations a personality of the most marked kind. We cannot supply his place. We feel that the possibilities of his future for us were not to be measured by ordinary standards. We regret the loss of the man, and the loss of his advice, counsel and assistance more than mere words can express.

We direct that this memorial be entered upon the minutes of the corporation, and that an engrossed copy be delivered to his widow and family. We tender them our sincere sympathy in the still greater affliction which they have sustained, but we are confident that they can find some consolation for their loss in the recollections of the successes of his short but beneficent life.

The man who painted pictures approved by the discerning, who understood literature and music, who expressed himself with charm and precision and yet knew how to meet the world of men and facts, added something to the business which remains a part of it.

The present is what it is because of the contributions of those who have gone before. Walter Weed left an impress which will never be erased.

In 1915, it was Mr. Locke's sad duty to record for the directors of Weed & Company, the passing of Hobart Weed, who died on September 23rd, the ninety-seventh anniversary of his house. His only regret in leave-taking was that he could not remain to participate in the One Hundredth Anniversary. Mr. Weed had lived a life rich in accomplishment, service and comradeship. Mr. Locke's Memorial follows:

During the fiscal year now closed, this company has lost by death, its honored President—Hobart Weed.

His life was prolonged beyond the allotted age of man and all of his business activities were devoted to the firm founded by his father early in the last century and continued by his brother and himself for many years, and in the course of time taken over and since prosecuted by this Corporation. From the day of the organization of the Company until his death, he was its President. The local and trade press have paid fitting tribute to his memory and fully recognized his prominence in his church, in musical circles and in everything that tended to promote the culture and welfare of our City and its people. But his life was lived with us. The growth and success of our business was his pride and comfort through all his later years. His gentle and kindly character, emphasized by his clear and vigorous mind and forceful nature, was manifested nowhere so fully as here.

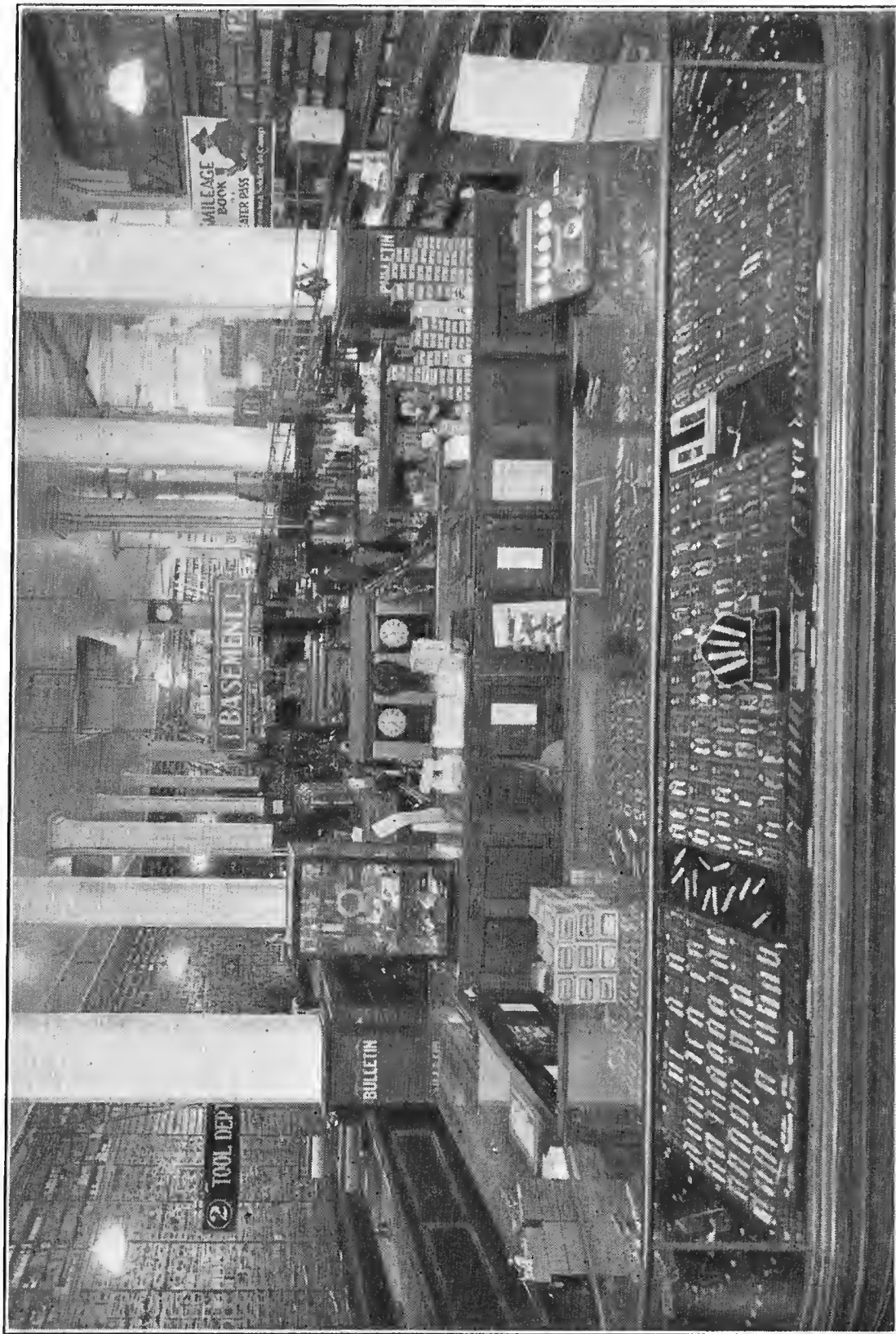
In his relations with his business associates and employees he was always just, considerate and generous. He never permitted the fixed opinions of advanced age to check the enterprise of youth. To the day of his final illness he met all questions with an open mind and was quick to see the merits of any suggested change in methods calculated to facilitate the transaction or increase of our business. His conservative mind never failed to grasp and never operated to obstruct improvement.

We shall long miss his cheerful commendation of work well done and his calm, well considered and able suggestions. His guiding hand is gone but his influence remains. We shall cherish his memory not only as that of a capable executive but with a tenderness felt only in the harsh business life for those who have dealt justly by all, who have been forbearing with all, who have been quick to recognize honest endeavor and faithful service, who have been clear-sighted and wise in action, successful in life, broadminded in affairs and who have met the manifold responsibilities of this world with dignity, fidelity and honor.

We direct that this brief tribute be spread upon the minutes of this Corporation.

The present officers of Weed & Company are: Shelton Weed, President and Treasurer; William C. Klune, First Vice-President; Loren C. Davenport, Second Vice-President; Theodore H. Meyer, Secretary. These gentlemen conduct the affairs of Weed & Company with noble precedents and traditions ever in mind. They have great reverence for the friendships and associations of their predecessors.

There are several distinguishing features in the Weed selling policy which deserve mention. The plan of selling hardware at prices as reasonable as is compatible with sound business has always been a Weed principle. This policy was crystallized into a creed which unconditionally guaranteed both the price and the quality of every article to be standard. This creed lettered on a reproduction of a shipping tag, is conspicuously displayed above the doors of the retail establishment and in advertisements. The creed reads: "If you can buy it elsewhere for less, return it and we will buy it back at full price." The Weed creed became a noted slogan. It rang with sincerity and yet it was human enough to induce smile and jest which Hobart Weed enjoyed hugely.



From the Entry — Main Street Store, Buffalo

"Profiteering" is not a new game. In the pioneer days the Weed Store never took advantage of their lack of competition and the settlers appreciated this fairness. So when new concerns came, the old customers stood by Weed & Company with the tenacity of brothers.

G. & T. Weed opened up their one-room shelter with but a single tho faithful helper. Today Weed & Company occupy five immense buildings and have a clerical pay-roll containing hundreds of names. Thaddeus Weed used to sit up nights with the goose-quill, sanding in lieu of blotting the pages of his ledger. Now Weed book-keeping is done by a battery of Burroughs Machines. G. & T., DeWitt and Hobart Weed used to keep one eye on the cash-till. You could never tell what might happen when you turned your back. Money is now automatically handled by trolley systems and registers.

During the century, Weed leadership has not been seriously challenged because the concern has stocked every hardware and mill supply article for which there could possibly be a call. "You can get it at Weed's" has been a household, office, factory and mill by-word all these busy years. Architects, builders, engineers, sportsmen, housewives, storekeepers, railroad executives, motorists, teamsters, farmers, bankers and teachers have depended on Weed's to deliver the goods.

Weed & Company have considered almost every utility which could be applied to metal or wood as hardware. The little Almanac which fitted into the vest pocket of the men of the 60's was comprehensive for the times. The present Catalog of Weed & Company measures 11 by 12 inches and contains 807 pages of India paper. It is as large as a dictionary and includes thousands of listings.

If you were to start out to build this Catalog anew, it would consume about two years of time. This inclusiveness, tho exceedingly difficult in war-time, has been a potent factor in creating the Weed business. The Weed management holds that the fewer times a jobber has to apologize for not being able to fill an order, the more successful will he be. The phrase "we regret" played a very minor part in the sales correspondence of the fathers of the house.

In the early days contact with the customer was more intimate, but the "principle of 1818" as it is known in the Weed office is to follow the good old Golden Rule which Hobart Weed insisted should never be left under the counter. A diamond bearing the date 1818, and the striking phrase, One Hundred Years of Successful Business, is now the trade-mark of Weed & Company. This mark tells a long and wonderful story. If you see the mark on a piece of merchandise, or a tag, remember that it means one hundred years of honest dealing. A firm cannot survive a century in one locality without the sterling mark of reputation and integrity on their transactions.

American arms have been victorious in many momentous crises during Weed & Company's existence. The major wars of 1812, the Indian Wars, the Civil War, the Spanish-American and the World-War have come within this century. The house has witnessed and weathered five financial panics of national importance—1857, '73, '84 '93 and 1907. Experience shows that America's depressions are of brief duration, but the passing of a vagrant cloud.

The title of this book "From Ox-Cart to Aeroplane" paints the sweep of the century. For the nation, it symbolizes the progress from the road-broken by the feet of plodding oxen to the conquest of the air by winged victory. In hardware parlance, we might

have selected some homely but equally dramatic contrasts.

This book might have been called "From Flint-lock to Automatic Gun," "From Broom to Vacuum Cleaner," "From Portable Tub to Bathroom de Luxe," or "From Shinplaster to Trade Acceptance." The retail stores of Weed & Company are national exhibitions of the varied products of mill, foundry, machine shop and factory. Here may be seen every innovation in hardware. Weed & Company sold the first safety-razor used in Buffalo. The conservative shavers shook their heads dubiously about this venture.

The Bronze Room of the Weed Store is devoted to interior trimmings after period designs. Whether your house be in the chaste Colonial style or the French Empire, the correct hardware may be supplied from this room.

This esthetic development in the use of hardware is comparatively recent in middle American cities. Weed & Company were among the first to show Jacobean, Adam and other historic reproductions of door-plates and knobs. It is this ever-searching for improvements that distinguishes a merchandizing institution.

The directing heads of Weed & Company appreciate the truth expressed by H. Gordon Selfridge the American merchant, who has given England its greatest retail establishment: "If any house is continually to grow and develop and not like the tree to stop after reaching a certain size, but to keep on growing greater, finer and more splendid, the head of such a house must make of business a great game which he loves for the game's sake and never tires of playing. The cold profits in pounds sterling, in dollars, francs or marks must represent simply the counters in the game—desirable in themselves but not the only prize. As the

father finds pleasure in watching the son's progress with each week's or year's study and experience, so the merchant should find keen pleasure in the yearly progress of his business—not only in volume but in prestige and excellence. The father does not always look forward to his son's reaching full maturity, for too often when that time is reached he finds his son less close to him and less his own. So the merchant cannot with wisdom consider to look forward to the final growth as the period of the greatest pleasure, because in a business there should be no final growth."

When this memorial book reaches your hands, Weed & Company will be commemorating the one-hundredth birthday of the house. A reproduction of the 1818 Store will grace the front entry of the retail establishment in Buffalo. Under the direction of Dr. John Lund an orchestra will interpret musical compositions written by Victor Herbert, the Dean of American composers and Dr. Lund in memory of their beloved friend, Hobart Weed.

September Twenty-third
1918

Biographical

“THE vision of the successive generations of men as they pass by in the long procession, recounting, each in turn, the lives and deeds of those who have gone before.”



From the Center—Main Street Store, Buffalo

Biographical

THE present generation of Weed is directly descendant from the Puritan Weed family of Gloucestershire and the Chapins of the same county. Both families came to America during the period of the wicked persecutions and extortionate taxes which Charles I levied upon prosperous Puritans. The Weeds, in common with many other uncompromising Puritans, left England at the period when John Eliot, John Hampden and Oliver Cromwell were wresting from the proud Charles the famous Bill of Rights, at the beginning of the troublous times which culminated in revolution and regicide. Both families were prominent in the Massachusetts Colony. Both were well represented in the ranks of the Revolutionary Army and later in the armies of 1812. The main branch of each family came to Buffalo, the Chapins arriving here in 1801, the Weeds in 1818. The marriage of Thaddeus Weed, son of Ananias Weed, to Louise Marie Chapin, daughter of Dr. Chapin, united the families and from this union descends the present house of Weed.

The Weed Family

The Weeds are of English and Puritan ancestry. Jonas Weed emigrated from England to Massachusetts in 1630. Jonas Weed (2d) son of the foregoing, had a son, Benjamin, who had a son, Benjamin, who married Sarah Hait. Ananias Weed, son of Benjamin Weed (2d) and Sarah Hait, was born in Stamford, Connecticut,

in 1752. At the outbreak of the Revolution he joined the Continental Army, and served through the war. He fought at the battle of White Plains, crossed the Delaware with Washington and took part in the famous surprise of the Hessians at Trenton. He was on General Washington's commissary staff during the memorable New Jersey Campaign with its awful winter in Valley Forge. From 1779 till the peace of 1783 he was in the Commissary Department and participated in expeditions against the British in New York and New Jersey.

The Chapin Family

The Chapin lineage is Puritan. Samuel Chapin of Massachusetts Colony took the freeman's oath in Boston in 1641 and removed to Springfield, Mass. Japhet Chapin, son of Samuel, was in the great Indian fight at Twiner's Falls on the 19th of May, 1676. Samuel Chapin (2d), son of Japhet, had a son, Caleb Chapin, who was killed in the French War. Capt. Caleb Chapin (2d), son of Caleb, was an officer in the Revolutionary War.

Dr. Cyrenius Chapin

DR. CYRENIUS CHAPIN, son of Capt. Caleb Chapin was a man whose career fills a memorable chapter in the pioneer history of Buffalo. Physician, soldier and frontiersman, Dr. Chapin was a typical American of that stern epoch when hardship and peril developed the latent resources of character. Cyrenius Chapin was born in Bernardston, Massachusetts, on the 7th of February, 1769. He studied medicine with his brother, Dr. Caleb Chapin. He practiced for several years at Windhall, Vermont, later removing to Sangerfield, Oneida County, N. Y. In 1801 he came to Buffalo. In 1803 he went to Fort Erie, but later returned with his family to Buffalo. Dr. Chapin's life was full of the hardships of the frontier physician, and he went on horseback to his patients, making hundreds of perilous journeys through the wilderness. He founded the first drug store in Buffalo, and often supplied gratuitously not only medicine but food to his needy patients. He wielded a great influence, and was highly esteemed by the Indians, who were accustomed to speak of him as "The Great Medicine Man."

When the war of 1812 broke out, Dr. Chapin raised a company of volunteers and offered his services, both as officer and surgeon. He was successively commissioned Captain, Major and Lieutenant-Colonel. He served with the American vanguard in the occupation of Fort George in May, 1813. In June he organized a body of mounted riflemen which he commanded in the fight at Beaver Dams, Canada, on the 24th of



The Wholesale Building—Swan Street, Buffalo

June, 1813, under Lieutenant-Colonel Boerstler, whose force was compelled to surrender. On July 12th Col. Chapin and his men were sent as prisoners toward Kingston, in two boats, under a heavy British guard. Col. Chapin had laid a carefully concerted plan of escape, and when the boats were a few miles from their destination, the Americans, at a signal, arose, overpowered the guards, steered for Fort Niagara. After a night of rowing delivered their erstwhile captors to the commander of the fort as prisoners of war. When the British attacked Buffalo in December, 1813, Col. Chapin made a daring stand at Black Rock and defended the place till he had only five men left. He then retreated to Buffalo, where he found a dismounted six-pounder cannon. Hastily mounting it on wagon wheels, he gathered a few men and boys whom he drew up at Niagara Street, where he fought the British till his cannon was disabled. When further resistance was useless, he mounted a horse, tied a white handkerchief to his sword, and riding to the enemy held them by parleying till the inhabitants of Buffalo had time to escape. He also obtained from the British officer in command advantageous terms for the surrender of the village, but the plighted word of the foe was shamefully violated. Col. Chapin was made a prisoner and taken to Montreal, where he was held nine months. On his return to Buffalo he was appointed surgeon of the military hospital. When he retired from this office he removed to Geneva, N. Y., but he returned to Buffalo in 1818, and here he continued to reside, practicing his profession and taking

an active part in public affairs till the close of his life. On the organization of the Erie County Medical Society in 1821, Dr. Chapin was made its first President. In 1836 the citizens of Buffalo presented him a service of silver plate as a testimonial of their admiration of him as a citizen and soldier.

In 1793 Dr. Chapin married Sylvia Burnham, of Bernardston, Mass. He died on the 20th of February, 1838, and was buried with military honors. The cemetery where his remains were laid to rest is now the site of the City and County Hall.

Louise Marie Chapin

LOUISE MARIE CHAPIN (Mrs. Thaddeus Weed), third daughter of Dr. Cyrenius Chapin, united intellectuality and rare loveliness. Mrs. Weed held a distinguished place in the social circles of Buffalo and was one of the most interesting of those persons who through length of days, powers of observation and memory form a bond between present and past. Mrs. Weed was born at Fort Erie, Canada, on the 19th of March, 1803. As a child she came with her parents to Buffalo, which was the city of her residence during the rest of her life. On the 9th of October, 1823, she was united in marriage to Thaddeus Weed. The death of Mrs. Weed occurred on the 20th day of July, 1894, while she was in her 92d year.



The Counting Room—Swan Street Building, Buffalo

Thaddeus Weed

THADDEUS WEED, son of Ananias Weed, was born in Stamford, Connecticut, in 1791. He was for some time a resident of Troy, N. Y. He came to Buffalo September 23, 1818, where he and George T. Weed opened a hardware store under the firm style of G. & T. Weed. The business prospered, becoming one of the leading mercantile houses of Buffalo. Thaddeus Weed married Louise Marie Chapin, daughter of Dr. Cyrenius Chapin. Their children were three sons, DeWitt Chapin, George Thaddeus and Hobart Weed, and a daughter, Mrs. Sylvia Louise Stevens. Louise Marie (Chapin) Weed survived her husband by many years, dying on the 20th of July, 1894, being then in her ninety-second year.

After an honorable and successful career Thaddeus Weed died in 1846. No Buffalonian of his day was held in higher estimation. Eminently public-spirited, he was one of the founders of Buffalo's first regular fire company. He was also a vestryman of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, of which he was one of the most active supporters. A man of exceptional ability and probity, he left a deep impress on the life and institutions of the city.

DeWitt Chapin Weed

DEWITT C. WEED, the first child of Thaddeus and Louise Chapin Weed was born in September, 1824. DeWitt Weed as a young man gave evidence of executive ability. He acquired ownership of the Weed Store in his twenty-seventh year.

It was operated under the title of DeWitt C. Weed & Company until some months after his death, which occurred in November, 1876, his fifty-second year.

In 1857 Mr. Weed took his younger brother, Hobart, in partnership as he had a keen desire to see the business remain in the family in event of his passing. Under DeWitt and Hobart Weed's personal direction, the third Weed Block was built.

DeWitt Weed was a liberal-minded man and assisted in the promotion of several public utilities. He was a Park Commissioner of the City of Buffalo and one of the Trustees of the Forest Lawn Cemetery Association.

Mr. Weed was much interested in lumbering. He paid especial attention during his management of the Weed Store to mill supplies and used a circular saw with the lettering "Old Established Hardware Store" as a trade-mark.

DeWitt C. Weed married Lucy H. Kimberley, a daughter of John L. Kimberley. Three children were born to them: George T., Kate S. and Edith Weed.

Hobart Weed

HOBART WEED, son of Thaddeus Weed, was born in Buffalo, and received his education at schools in Buffalo and Toronto, the Percival Classical School in Fredonia, N. Y., and Rev. H. D. Noble's School at Brookfield, Conn. After finishing his studies, Mr. Weed returned to Buffalo, where he gained his first experience in business in the store founded by his father, then being conducted by his brother, DeWitt C. Weed. After he had learned the business Mr. Weed with his brother formed the co-partnership of DeWitt C. Weed & Co. On the death of Mr. DeWitt C. Weed in 1880, the firm became Weed & Co., with Mr. Hobart Weed as principal owner. In 1903 the house was incorporated as Weed & Company, with Hobart Weed as President. It celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary in 1893. One of Mr. Weed's most noteworthy activities has been in advancing musical culture. The musical career of Mr. Weed began in his youth. While a student at school he organized and trained a choir. When he was only seventeen years old, the vestry of St. Paul's Episcopal Church placed the entire direction of the church music in Mr. Weed's hands, and he had charge of it to the day of his passing. Mr. Weed sang in the choir of St. Paul's as early as 1870, was made member of the Music Committee in 1873, and was chosen chairman of that body in 1881. From early in life he was interested in procuring for the Buffalo public the best vocal and instrumental talent for concerts. He had an important part in educating the popular taste in



The Rochester Store

music in the Queen City. Among the more notable musical organizations and artists brought to Buffalo by Mr. Weed and his associates were the Theodore Thomas Orchestra, the Boston Symphony and New York Symphony Orchestra, the Pittsburg Orchestra and the Damrosch Opera Company; Melba, Nordica, Sembrich, Gadske, Christine Nilsson and the great artists of the last generation. Ernestine Schumann-Heink and Victor Herbert were his personal friends. Connected with St. Paul's Episcopal Church all his life, Mr. Weed was a vestryman and one of its most prominent members. He was an active member of the Buffalo Chamber of Commerce, held life memberships in the Fine Arts Academy and the Young Men's Christian Association. He was a member of the Buffalo, Ellicott and Country Clubs, and of the Hardware Club of New York City. In 1870 Mr. Weed married Miss Harriet Monteath, daughter of William and Rhoda Monteath of Buffalo. Mr. and Mrs. Weed had three children, Emelie M. (Mrs. Louis B. Hart), Shelton and the late Walter Irving Weed. Hobart Weed died on September 23d, 1915, on the 97th anniversary of the founding of his great hardware enterprise.



The
Buffalo
Warehouse



The
Rochester
Warehouse

Walter Irving Weed

WALTER IRVING WEED, son of Hobart and Harriet Monteath Weed was born October 8th, 1876. He entered the hardware house of Weed & Company at the age of seventeen and devoted himself to a mastery of the details of the business, serving in many routine capacities. Altho by nature of a literary and artistic temperament, as a boy he felt he should continue in the mercantile business established by his grandfather and continued by his family for three generations.

As the head of the retail sales department he devised and introduced new and successful methods, the attractive display of prosaic merchandise hitherto thought impossible of embellishment, window dressing, and the extension of his firm into the field of sterling silver, one of the first hardware establishments in the country to adopt such a department. Soon after the incorporation of Weed & Company, Walter Weed was made Treasurer.

He supervised and determined the advertising policy of the firm which his artistic skill and taste led him to extensively illustrate. Finding the stock cuts hitherto used in the trade to be unsatisfactory, he designed and used outline sketches. In this connection he studied the literature of modern commercial publicity and could claim as warm personal friends many of the men who lead in that field of endeavor. His skill in the line of pictorial advertising display enabled him to be the winner of a prize competition conducted by "The Iron Age."

He also found time to formulate and apply time-saving devices, the adoption of systemized stock-keeping and inventorying, as well as generally supervising the departments from which he had graduated and subsequently developed. The "Weed Creed" slogan and "1818" trade-mark he made keynotes of advertising campaigns and exploited with signal success.

Of recent years the substantial increase of the business, as exemplified by the absorption of the Rochester house of Palmer, Weaver & Richmond, the negotiations for which were carried on by him personally, compelled his attention to the financial work of the firm. Here as elsewhere, his efforts were eminently successful. Walter Weed died at the age of 34, after spending just half of his life in the business created by his forefathers. For few men of double that span could as much be claimed of accomplishment. His life was full of earnest endeavor.

Mr. Weed married Frances Regester, daughter of Doctor Jacob A. Regester, Rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Three children were born to them: Francis Monteath Weed, Harriet Monteath Weed and Walter Chapin Weed.

Walter Irving Weed died on August 17th, 1911.

Addenda

IN telling our story under the ambitious title "From Ox-Cart to Aeroplane," we have but endeavored to give the history of three generations of one family in the same business. In order to make the recital understandable to our friends in other states, we have been compelled, much to our dismay, to omit mention of many events and institutions near to our hearts, as good Buffalonians.

There are some places in Buffalo which existed during the periods of the three Weed Blocks and are indelibly linked with them in local history. Indeed the Weed Store furnished the hardware for most of them. It has been said that there was hardly a public building in Buffalo not plenished with Weed equipment and trimmings. Tho many of these structures are gone these many years, the sweet light of memory hovers about the sites.

Our third chapter heading shows the corner of Main and Swan Streets in 1818. The near neighbors of the little Weed Store which occupied the corner were the pharmacy of Townsend & Coit and the general store of Hart & Lay.

In Mr. Frank H. Severance's valued "Earlier Buffalo Picture Book" is an engraving from a wood-block by J. W. Orr of this same stretch of street in 1838, which then included the Bank of Buffalo. The builders of this time selected the west side of the street to avoid the severe Lake winds striking their store fronts.

Steele's Printing Office, the Wall Paper Store of N. Wilgus, the Book Store of George H. Derby & Company and the Arcole Foundry were on the Lake end of Main Street in the years 1838 to '50. The Western Hotel, on the Terrace, was built in 1841. It was used as police headquarters in 1888, when it was dismantled.

Gothic Hall, erected in 1843, is a curious architectural creation which still stands at 189 Main Street. The old Academy of Music, for many years Buffalo's elite theatre was opened as the Metropolitan in 1852. If the phonograph could have recorded the voices heard in this auditorium, how cherished the records would be today! St. John's Church stood on the present site of the Statler Hotel in the '60's. When the varied collection of buildings were torn down for the erection of the Ellicott Square, we saw the end of the second epoch on this acreage, for as early as 1838, the "Buffalo Patriot" had its press rooms on this location.

The recent dedication of the Perry Monument at the Front, brings back the story of an early effort to do honor to the immortal Commodore. Mr. Severance has told graphically of this project:

"Among the many enterprises started in the exuberant '30's was a monument to Oliver Hazard Perry, hero of the Battle of Lake Erie. In 1836 an organization of Buffalo citizens was effected, for its erection. There were committees on correspondence, on finance, on subscriptions. Stephen Champlin, veteran of the famous fight, was the happy choice for Treasurer. In May "two splendid designs" had been secured. Plans were placed on view at the Council Chamber. The monument was to stand at present Shelton Square; was to be one hundred feet high, of marble from East Chester, N. Y., and was to cost \$75,000."

The "Commercial Advertiser" of July 30th, 1836, remarked that the location at Shelton Square commanded the finest view the city afforded of Lake Erie and the glorious Niagara. The same vantage point today is interrupted by such cloud-piercing buildings as the Prudential, White, Telephone and other modern towers of business Babel as they appear to some who sigh for an older day.

EDITOR: BRIAN D. SZAFRANSKI; ELMA, NY USA
COURTESY: WESTERN NY GAS & STEAM ENGINE ASSOC.
ALEXANDER, NEW YORK USA
WWW.ALEXANDERSTEAMSHOW.COM

